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After a retrospective glance at the spirit of Oratorio, as well as at the efforts made in the domain of religious—but, be it well observed, not of church—music, in so far as Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, and Richard Wagner (for instance, in his "Liebesmahl der Apostel"), as well as others, have produced admirable works of this description, Eckart proceeds to consider more minutely the nature of Opera, that hermaphrodite in which, according to the assertion of celebrated aestheticians, two equal powers, music and drama, are combined.

At the head of the drama stood France; at the head of opera, Italy, says Eckart.* It was reserved for Germany to unite both. The efforts made for this purpose are not new, for they began a century ago. Were opera defined as a drama which succeeds in representing the rise and conflicts, as well as the elevation, of individual sentiment into the expression of large masses by means of tone on a verbal foundation, and a dramatic plot, contending parties might find in this explanation the means of coming to an understanding. The drama connected with opera has not remained the drama of spoken language. It has, as far as possible, done away with motives, action, and characterization, to limit itself to sentiment; but the music, also, is no longer simply music; it has to raise itself from mere melody to characterization. How the two elements could become one, Gluck has shown in a very well known instance, namely: his "Alceste." Eckart adduces utterances of his, such as: "When I am working at an opera, I have to begin by forgetting that I am a musician."† Gluck himself met with a great deal of opposition. The aim he had in view was the reform of "the noblest of theatrical entertainments," (*Schauspiele*) "in which all the arts have an equal share." This enmity against what is new, the lecturer further illustrated by Zelter's well known depreciatory opinion of Weber's "Freischütz." Gluck, however, was all the more emphatically acknowledged, not only by the people, but also by the poets. Lessing, Klopstock, and Herder, looked upon him as the hero of modern times. Compared to him, Mozart was reactionary since he again made music the ruler, degraded poetry into a servant, and even permitted prose. But in musical characterization he surpasses Gluck and all who come after him. He is a Shakspeare of tone.‡ The reaction against Gluck culminates in Rossini, but, on the other hand, though in different manners, Weber, Meyerbeer, Auber, Lortzing, Berlioz, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, all adopted a course calculated to restore music to the arms of poetry. "Tannhäuser" awoke in the Venusberg; German music turned from the domain of sensuality to prayer and penance—to poetry.§

they belong to the Music of the Future, is another novelty for us—at least it is a bold assertion.

* This sentence again sounds like a paradox. Where and when did France ever march at the head of the drama? The time of Racine, Corneille, and later, Voltaire, appear to be brought in only for the sake of effect, since neither with the development of our drama, nor of our opera, has it the least in the world to do.

† Gluck meant, probably, by this, something analogous to the assertion of the poet who should say that he must forget all about lyric poetry directly he writes a drama.

‡ This sentence, if further carried out, would, of necessity, so shake all the deductions made by the Musicians of the Future that it would be impossible to consider them as anything more than merely preparatory and transitory; or, at the most, as the adequate musical expression of an incomplete epoch, struggling and struggling and fermenting everywhere.

§ Although Eckart expressly denies any intention of speaking either for or against Wagner, we must dis-

Eckart now gives a sketch of R. Wagner's life—that is, of his musical life. We will here touch upon only a few separate points. It was Weber's "Freischütz" which made Wagner decide on devoting himself to music. It was the impression produced by Beethoven which excited him to write a pastoral, whereof the music and words sprang up simultaneously. The year 1830 with its storms, passed by Wagner without affecting him. A sketch for "Kosziusko" was laid aside, and, instead of it, after "Gozzi," he wrote "Die Feen," an opera interesting from the fact that it in Wagner first glorifies the principal figure recurring in most of his works, namely, that of the loving and self-sacrificing woman. This opera is also remarkable for being a fellow to his "Lohengrin." In his next epoch, characterized by a deep study of Italian and French music, he felt induced to turn Shakspeare's "Measure for Measure" into an opera. This was followed, in the year 1838, by "Rienzi," which betrayed the influence of Spontini. He had finished two acts of it in Riga, when he felt impelled to go to Paris. On his way, he was flung by a storm at sea on the coast of Norway—an incident which he turned to account in "Der fliegende Holländer," which, fortunately did not prevent him from completing "Rienzi," as well as "Der fliegende Holländer." In the last work, the idea of which Eckart, in a rare fit of gushiness, ranks with the Odyssey and the Ahasver, Wagner for the first time left the ordinary libretto. During his stay in Paris, moreover, the folk's book of "Tannhäuser" fell into his hands, subsequently leading him to the study of our great old German epics, as well as into the legendary world of the North. At Dresden, whither he had been summoned as conductor, in 1843, "Tannhäuser" sprang into life. "On the artistically elevated character of this creation," said Eckart, "Posterity will pronounce a milder judgment than that of the present day."

The impression produced by "Tannhäuser" throughout Germany, was a very powerful one. People felt that a time would perhaps come when the drama, as in former days, would again form part of the service of religion.* As a satirical production, followed "Die Meistersänger Nürnberg." Specimens of this do not give a favorable idea of Wagner's comic talent. In "Lohengrin," the idea of which Eckart ranks with the myths of Jupiter and Semele, of Eros and Psyche, Wagner strove to attain the highest pitch of dramatic lucidity; but he found neither the public nor the artists he required, and therefore—says Eckart—he joined the Revolution (?). How little of a politician Wagner was, is proved by the fact that, at the very time all Europe was in a ferment, he came to a full consciousness of his artistic aims.† He was nearly deciding

nate the above comparison as something extremely hazardous, especially as it just reverses the truth so far as music is concerned. All persons agree that not only does Wagner's music not renounce a sensual character, but absolutely carries it to the very highest pitch. It would, therefore, be far more correct to say: Wagner, it is true, delivered music from the Venusberg of Italy, but immediately conducted it to a new Venusberg of his own invention.

* That such a notion has been entertained after the Passion Plays of the Oberammergau, is well-known and intelligible; but the assertion of such a thing after "Tannhäuser," is an unparalleled specimen of Aesthetic Chauvinism!

† It is thus we understand this sentence, though the next one indirectly asserts just the contrary. When "Europe was fermenting" Wagner also appears to have been going through a by no means clear process of fermentation himself.

for the spoken drama; that is, nearly deciding on himself becoming a dramatist. With regard to his next plans, he wavered between Siegfried and Barbarossa, but the mass of action in the latter historical subject overwhelmed him. He concluded from this, that man alone should be the supreme hero of the true work of art, but that this was impossible under the pressure of historical accessory matter, and he, therefore, rejected drama, not for itself alone, but also theoretically and generally,* returning to the "Nibelungen Saga." Driven from Dresden, he fled to Switzerland, where he finished "Tristan und Isolde." His return to Germany, and his last work—which, since Schnorr's death, lies, probably forever, bound with crape, in Wagner's desk—are so nearly connected with the present that they do not fall within the sphere of discussion. In conclusion, Eckart recapitulates the leading features of Wagner's operas. The principal difference between Wagner and his predecessors and contemporaries, consists in his selecting the Myth and the Saga as operative subjects. It is his aim to employ music not as an artistic means, but as a kind of nature, as if the heroes of this legendary world—supposing the period of the Myth ever really existed—would not have spoken, but have sung.† The speaker tacks on to this the following reflections. Historical heroes could not be introduced singing, and made operative heroes, because, transformed into beings of sentiment, they would lose in our eyes.‡ With regard to the qualities peculiar to Wagner's operas, Eckart concludes by mentioning the absence of melody, the heaping-up of instrumental effects, and the banishment, on principle, of all monologues—that is, of all airs. It is, therefore, with perfect identity of opinion, that we subscribe the conclusions at which Eckart arrives in his lecture—namely, that Wagner's successor (that is, the Wagner of the Future) will have to follow Mozart, and once more restore melody as musical characteristic to all its rights; that opera and spoken drama must for ever remain separate; and that the dream of the "Work of Art of the Future" in which all the arts working together, must sacrifice their own peculiar nature, will never be aught but an illusion.

BADEN-BADEN.—M. Alary recently gave a concert, in which Mesdames Grisi, Viardot-Garcia, and Signor Mario took part. The following was the programme: Duet, "Per Valli per Boschi," Blangini; "Qui la Voce," Bellini; Air (Mario); Duet, "Ebben a te ferisci," and aria, "Pensa alla Patria," Rossini; Romance, "Raggio d'Amore," Donizetti; "Love Song," Alary; two Mazurkas, Chopin (arranged for the voice by Madame Viardot-Garcia); Irish Song, Moore; and Duet, "D'un tenero Core," Donizetti.

* Eckart would have done better to omit this sentence, for it reminds us of the fable of the Fox and Grapes.

† Another delusive phrase. Would anyone assert that Homer wished to propagate the illusion that if the period of the Myth then really existed, his Gods and Heroes would actually have spoken in hexameters? This is either meant as a joke or is an exaggeration of what we usually understand in art.

‡ With this, again, it is impossible to agree. Why should we not represent historical heroes as beings of sentiment as well as anyone else? "Bellisario," and Meyerbeer's "Prophète," are proofs we may. The reason why, for instance, Gustavus Adolphus or Napoleon would be ridiculous as operative heroes, is that they are too near to us. Eckart himself says that we might take Mahomet, though not Luther, as the hero of an opera.